1939

William Glackens Memorial Exhibition

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WILLIAM GLACKENS
MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

DECEMBER 14, 1938 TO JANUARY 15, 1939

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
TEN WEST EIGHTH STREET · NEW YORK

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WILLIAM GLACKENS

WILLIAM J. GLACKENS

by Guy Pène du Bois

When the obituaries of William Glackens appeared the day after his death I sat down in great indignation to write the newspapers. The letter was never sent. Some unaccountable and unaccustomed modesty intervened, brought on by thought of him perhaps, of that complete absorption in his work which made all other considerations seem footless. It is entirely likely that, working as he did almost all the time, it never occurred to him that his pictures might do the talking for him or that any activity on that subject was at all necessary. He never seemed to think beyond the pleasure he had in working. Talking of him with his very old friend James Preston at East Hampton this summer it came to both of us that we were never invited up to the studio to see what he was doing. He would talk about his work sometimes, especially if he had just left it, but only then about the difficulties he was having. These difficulties not infrequently drove him mad as, one day, he flung the canvas he had been working on in his garden at Vence into the air. The canvas landed very high up in a tree where, from that distance, it must have looked very good to him for the gardener and others were immediately set to getting it down again. The difficulties must have been part of the pleasure he had painting for no painter of my acquaintance spends more time on that end of his profession than he did.

In this unsent letter to the papers I wrote rather ostentatiously perhaps: "If the scales used to measure news values gave true weight his passing would have been first page matter." And this of course would be true in any other world. In ours, if obviousness is pardonable, men weigh in proportion to the noise they make. This applies more pertinently to artists than to others for few people bother about art and busy editors less than any. Some sophisticated artists realize this. They will explain that publicity is valuable only when on the news pages of

papers and will themselves do anything to get on them. It may be that these men have so little faith in themselves that, like a balloon, it can be blown into decent proportions only by outside winds. They grow in stature, to use other words, with the increase in publicity about them. This becomes quite curious when it is remembered that the *réclame* is incited by themselves. They serve here for contrast. William Glackens possessed neither their tongue-in-the-cheek wisdom nor their artistic folly.

It is his own fault that he should need an introduction—the wiseacres might say. He never did anything about introducing himself. There was, on the other hand, no time from his art wasted on that nonsense. Like Corot he had two real passions, painting and fishing, and, as with that saintly Frenchman, it will always be a question which one was the recreation. The characters of the two are in almost complete accord. Both, for an example, had enough money so that selling pictures was not essential to their welfare. Both had enough faith in themselves, a thing apparently rare among financially independent painters, so that they did not need to be bolstered by the insidious flattery of sales. Both were kindly almost to a fault. If Corot carried that fault further than Glackens, as when he painted those trees "for the little birds" at the importunity of dealers that was because his temptation, rather than his kindliness, was greater. Glackens found good in the work of all painters with some indignation against those who could not follow him. At the meeting held at the Academy, last year, for the election of new members, he took so long looking at examples of the candidates' work, hung on the walls, that the meeting was called to order before he had finished. Afterwards he told me that he had depleted his supply of "yesses" —little circular tags marked yes or no used in the voting. "If you look long enough at a work you'll always find something good in it." Being an honest man it had taken him, in this case, a very long time. But you can be sure that somewhere in these, for the most part, banal works he had ferreted out a moment of good painting, been sure that it was there.

About his own work he was much more severe. Some pictures, like the latest one of his daughter Lenna, took him years to bring to a conclusion. In the rack adjoining his studio at No. 10 West 9th Street there

were more than a hundred set aside for some future right moment when they could be finished. Some of these works, and more than a few were glorious, had never been seen by the family. He certainly did not call upon the opinion of others. He walked in solitude through this benighted world and searched for the good in it, making sure that it was good, as he had done that day with the Academy prospects.

He was never concerned with those social convulsions which have become, in a fashionable way, the subject matter of the young. Though he belonged to that group very aptly called the New York Realists by the Whitney Museum of American Art he was, as they all were, an individualist, a man—as I have said somewhere before—like Candide, content to cultivate his own garden. This does not mean that he denied forbears, that he was a reckless fool burning all bridges behind him nor that he failed to make use of the richness of cultural inheritance. His tremendously diversified orchestrations could never have been built without a profound knowledge of the art of the past. But in their quickness, gaiety, wit, there is little to remind of renaissance majesty, an aristocrat monopoly, which goes pompously sour in the hands of the contemporary painters attempting to recapture it. Neither is Glackens in any fat way sumptuous. He is essentially clear, a man who has cut away all the old shibboleths, learned to see and to choose, which is the same thing, for himself. He talks about our world in its rhythms.

But he would certainly laugh that short, quick laugh of his if I were able to show him this. "Artists" he told me once, "say the silliest things about painting." To him it was something you did the best you could about. On one side there was a glamorous nature and on the other a flat canvas and muddy pigment. But in the choice of subject matter he was very particular. That quickness in him, his almost staccato gait, demanded something resembling it in the thing he was to do. One of his happiest and most productive summers was spent on a small island opposite the lively beach at Isle Adam. He had rented the island and could work there, facing the beach, uninterrupted. He liked observing people who were busy about pleasure, who, having thrown off cares, could be debonair. At play, free of the yoke worn in every day life by so many, they could be more nearly themselves. His are beautiful only in the sense of being most amazingly alive; quick and human people,

lent his own wit and certainly a pleasure to know. They are neither sensuous nor languorous, freed of even that constriction.

Toward the end, his strength failing, he resorted to painting tiny pictures, a single fruit or flower wherein, by main strength or pure joy, he continued to report the glorious fullness of color and light and action which life had been to him.

William Glackens will not be placed next to Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakins, A. P. Ryder, the present father and son and holy ghost of our art, by those serious minded persons with a Germanic passion for tabulating, who have arrived at being able to measure the importance of moods. They have in their perfectly childish way managed to conclude that a mad and destructive ocean has more artistic value than a mild and sparkling one. Agreement with this old fashioned idea is difficult. I am not at all positive that a frown is more important than a smile. I even go so far as to think that evaluation infantile. And while the three in question had all the earnestness and seriousness of the good old American convention in art and were, in every way, honest men, it certainly can be wished that they were enough at home in painting and and in their approach to life to occasionally let down the bars and smile a little. William Glackens should make a fourth in that assembly. His gaiety would do them good in showing that a man can be lively and still be great. It might also make the rest of the world see that we had at last reached maturity in art.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

William James Glackens was born March 13, 1870, in Philadelphia, where his ancestors of English-Irish and Pennsylvania Dutch origin had lived for many generations. After graduating with the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the Central High School, Philadelphia, he commenced the study of art at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, at the same time starting his professional career as illustrator for the *Philadelphia Record*, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and *Philadelphia Press*. While on the staff of these newspapers, he became associated with George Luks, Everett Shinn and John Sloan, who were employed in a similar capacity.

In 1895 he went to Paris working independently and exhibiting a painting in the Paris Salon. He was also an exhibitor in the Paris Exposition of 1900 where at the close of his life in the Exposition of 1937 he was to receive the highest award accorded an American artist, the Grand Prix.

Returning to America in 1896, he moved to New York resuming his work as illustrator for the *New York Herald*, the *New York World* and various magazines. Among his assignments were sketches for *McClure's* of a log-drive in Wisconsin, and a series of drawings covering the entire campaign in Cuba of the Spanish-American War. In 1902 he visited Saint Pierre and Miquelon, Newfoundland, with Ernest Fuhr.

The following year he returned to this country and in 1903 married the artist, Edith Dimock, in Hartford, Conn., and three years later with his wife, made another trip to Europe, painting this time in Spain.

Glackens first exhibited at the New Arts Club and in 1908 at Macbeth's as one of "The Eight," that group of individualists who have exerted a notable influence on American art. The other members were Prendergast, Davies, Lawson, Henri, Luks, Shinn and Sloan, the last four like Glackens, former Philadelphians.

Always interested in liberal movements in art, he exhibited in the first Independent Exhibition in 1910, and after the organization of the Society of Independent Artists, was its first president in 1916 and 1917. Instrumental in organizing the Armory show of 1913, he acted as Chairman of the Committee for the selection of American exhibitors.

For more than forty years Glackens' home was in New York City, many of his summers spent in Bellport, Long Island, in Hartford, Gloucester and New Hampshire. In 1925 he went to France. The next seven years were divided as far as painting is concerned, between Paris and its suburbs, the south of France and his New York studio. Since 1932 he remained and painted in this country.

He died May 22, 1938.

His work has been shown in all the important exhibitions in this country and has been accorded the following awards: Gold Medal for drawing, Pan American Exposition, Buffalo, N. Y., 1901; Silver Medal for painting and Bronze Medal for illustrations, St. Louis Exposition, St. Louis, Mo., 1904; Honorable Mention, International Exposition, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1905; Bronze Medal, Panama Pacific Exposition, San Francisco, Calif., 1915; Temple Gold Medal, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pa., 1924; Second Prize, International Exposition, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1929; Carl Beck Gold Medal, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pa., 1933; Jennie Sesnan Medal, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pa., 1936; Alleghany Garden Club Prize, Pittsburgh International, 1936; Grand Prix, Paris Exposition, 1937; J. Henry Scheidt Prize, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pa., 1938.

He was a member of the National Academy of Design (A. N. A. 1906, N. A. 1933), Society of American Illustrators, American Society of Painters, Sculptors and Gravers, Society of Independent Artists and the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and others.

His work is represented in many private collections and in the following public institutions: Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Mass.; Albright Art Gallery, Buffalo, N. Y.; Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pa.; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.; Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Columbus, Ohio; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, Mich.; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, N. Y.; Newark Museum Association, Newark, N. J.; Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.; Sweetbriar College, Sweetbriar, Va.; University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Neb.; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, N. Y.

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

The Whitney Museum of American Art wishes to make grateful acknowledgment to the following museums and collectors who have generously contributed works as loans to this exhibition:

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MRS. WILLIAM J. GLACKENS . . . . . New York
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THE NEWARK MUSEUM . . . . . Newark, N. J.
PHILLIPS MEMORIAL GALLERY . . . . . Washington, D. C.
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA . . . . . Lincoln, Neb.
AND OTHER PRIVATE COLLECTORS

The Museum also wishes to express its indebtedness to Messrs. Guy Pène du Bois, Leon Kroll and Eugene Speicher, who acted as an Advisory Committee in the selection of the paintings.

CATALOGUE

Unless otherwise designated, the works in this exhibition are lent by Mrs. William Glackens.

GALLERY I

PAINTINGS

1. PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S WIFE 1904. *Signed l.l.* 75″ x 40″
2. FLYING KITES, MONTMARTRE 1906. *Signed l l* 24″ x 32″
   Lent by Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
3. SHOPPERS 1907. *Signed l.r.* 60″ x 60″
4. COASTING IN CENTRAL PARK 1905. *Signed l.r.* 26″ x 32″
5. RESTAURANT DU PONT 1926. 20″ x 29″
6. A MOUNTAIN LAKE 1920. 20″ x 30″
7. LUXEMBOURG GARDENS 1904. *Signed l.l.* 23¾″ x 32″
   Lent by The Corcoran Gallery of Art.
8. CHEZ MOUQUIN 1905. *Signed l.l.* 49″ x 36¾″
   Lent by The Art Institute of Chicago.
9. BAL BULLIER About 1895. *Signed l.r.* 24″ x 32″
10. PORTRAIT OF A MUSICIAN (FERDINAND SINZIG) About 1906. *Signed l.r.* 75¼″ x 40″
11. PORTRAIT OF GEORGE B. LUKS About 1900. 30″ x 25″
12. EAST RIVER FROM BROOKLYN About 1902. 25″ x 30″
13. CAFÉ DE LA PAIX About 1906. *Signed l.r.* 15″ x 18¼″
14. HAMMERSTEIN'S ROOF GARDEN About 1901. *Signed u.l.* 30″ x 25″
15. HILLSIDE About 1929. 18″ x 24″
16. GRACIE SQUARE About 1935. *Signed l.r.* 18″ x 24″
17. BUEN RETIRO, MADRID 1906. *Signed l.l.* 25½″ x 32″
18. CHÂTEAU THIERRY 1906. *Signed l.l.* 24″ x 32″

GALLERY II

PAINTINGS

19. BEACH SCENE—GREAT SOUTH BAY About 1915. *Signed l.l.* 26″ x 32″
20. THE DREAM RIDE About 1920. *Signed l.l.* 48″ x 54″
21. BOUQUET IN QUIMPER PITCHER 1937. *Signed l.l.* 24″ x 18″

22. The Artist's Wife and Son 1911. 48″ x 36″
23. Gladioli About 1926. *Signed l.l.* 24″ x 20″
24. Beach at Blue Point About 1915. *Signed l.r.* 25″ x 30″
25. Nude with Apple 1910. 40″ x 57″

GALLERY III

PAINTINGS

26. Child in Chinese Costume About 1918. *Signed l.l.* 48″ x 30″
(Frame designed and carved by William Glackens.)
27. At the Beach 1925. *Signed l.l.* 25″ x 30″
Lent by The Newark Museum.
28. Girl in Black and White 1914. *Signed l.l.* 32″ x 26″
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.
29. Bathers at Bellport About 1920. *Signed l.l.* 25″ x 30″
Lent by Phillips Memorial Gallery.
30. Plums and Peaches 1937. 9″ x 15″
31. Avenue de la Croix des Gardes 1932. *Signed l.l.* 15″ x 21¾″
32. The Conservatory 1917. *Signed l.r.* 18″ x 24″
33. Flowers on Checked Tablecloth 1925. *Signed u.r.* 18″ x 15″
34. Nude 1924. *Signed u.l.* 32″ x 22″
35. Anemones and Tulips in Brown Jar About 1928.
Signed l.l. 18″ x 15″
36. Bal Martinique 1928. *Signed l.r.* 22″ x 32″
37. Portrait of a Young Girl About 1918. *Signed l.r.* 32″ x 26″
38. Beach at St. Jean de Luz 1929. *Signed l.r.* 24″ x 32″
39. Christmas Roses About 1930. *Signed l.r.* 15¾″ x 13″
40. Armenian Girl 1916. *Signed l.r.* 32″ x 26″
Lent by The Barnes Foundation
41. Mimosa and other Flowers 1925. *Signed u.l.* 18″ x 15″
42. Beach Scene Near New London 1918. *Signed l.l.* 26″ x 32″
Lent by The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, Ferdinand Howald Collection.
43. Vence 1930. *Signed l.l.* 18″ x 24″
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.
44. Bay at La Ciotat 1930. *Signed l.l.* 15″ x 20″
45. Flowers on a Garden Chair 1925. *Signed l.r.* 20″ x 15″

46. Bathers, Bellport, No. 1 1913. *Signed l.r.* 26″ x 32″
47. Study of a Nude About 1915. *Signed l.r.* 24″ x 20″
48. Garden at Hartford 1918. *Signed l.l.* 26″ x 32″
49. Nude with Pink Chair About 1934. *Signed l.l.* 20″ x 15″

GALLERY IV

PAINTINGS

50. Two Nudes About 1908. *Signed u.l.* 44″ x 29½″
51. Walker's Pond About 1920. *Signed l.l.* 22″ x 32″
(*Frame designed and carved by William Glackens.*)
52. Girl with Draperies About 1916. *Signed l.l.* 30″ x 25″
53. The Saco About 1922. 25″ x 30″
54. Hillside Near La Ciotat 1930. *Signed l.r.* 26″ x 32″
55. The Horse-Chestnut Tree About 1928. *Signed l.r.* 26″ x 32″
56. Lenna and Imp 1930. *Signed l.l.* 62½″ x 41¾″
57. Spring in the Square About 1928. 25″ x 30″
58. Fête de Suquet 1932. *Signed l.r.* 25¾″ x 32″
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.
59. Girl with Yellow Stockings 1909. *Signed l.r.* 24″ x 18″
60. Bath House, Bellport About 1914. 26″ x 32″
61. Family Group 1911. *Signed l.r.* 72″ x 84″
62. The Raft 1915. *Signed l.r.* 25″ x 30″
Lent by The Barnes Foundation.
63. Flowers in Pottery Pitcher 1933. *Signed l.l.* 28¾″ x 19½″
64. A Riviera Hillside 1932. *Signed l.r.* 21½″ x 32″
65. Summer About 1914. *Signed l.l.* 26″ x 32″
66. The Soda Fountain 1935. *Signed l.r.* 48″ x 36″
67. Boat Landing at Gloucester About 1918. *Signed l.l.* 26″ x 32″
68. St. Jean 1930. *Signed l.r.* 20″ x 29″
Lent by Addison Gallery of American Art.
69. Girl in Red Hat About 1928. *Signed l.r.* 30″ x 18″
70. Beatrice Standing 1928. *Signed l.r.* 32″ x 22″
71. Home in New Hampshire 1919. 22″ x 32″
72. Nude and Red Robe About 1928. 32″ x 26″

WEST HALLWAY

PAINTINGS

73. CENTRAL PARK, WINTER About 1912. *Signed l.r.* 25″ x 30″
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

74. OUTSIDE THE GUTTENBURG RACETRACK 1897.
Signed l.r. 25½″ x 32″

75. PARK ON THE RIVER About 1902. *Signed l.l.* 26″ x 32″

GALLERY V

PAINTINGS

76. CHILD IN A GARDEN 1916. *Signed l.l.* 32″ x 26″

77. PORTRAIT OF MISS OLGA D. 1910. *Signed l.r.* 32″ x 26″
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

78. PARADE, WASHINGTON SQUARE 1912. *Signed l.r.* 26″ x 31″
Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

79. BOUQUET IN PURPLE VASE About 1926. *Signed l.l.* 24″ x 18″

80. RACE TRACK 1909. *Signed l.r.* 26″ x 32″
Lent by The Barnes Foundation.

81. BLACK-EYED SUSANS About 1922. 20″ x 18″

82. CAFE LAFAYETTE 1914. *Signed l.r.* 32″ x 26″
Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Isham.

83. WHITE ROSE AND OTHER FLOWERS 1937. *Signed l.l.* 20″ x 15″

84. THE GREEN CAR 1912. *Signed l.r.* 26″ x 32″
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

85. PROMENADE 1927. 32″ x 26″
Lent by The Detroit Institute of Arts.

86. MAHONE BAY 1911. 26″ x 32″
Lent by The University of Nebraska, F. M. Hall Collection.

87. WOMAN AND CHILD About 1915. *Signed l.l.* 32″ x 26″

88. JETTIES AT BELLPORT About 1916. *Signed l.l.* 25″ x 30″
Lent by Albright Art Gallery.

89. WALTER HAMPDEN AS HAMLET About 1920.
Signed l.r. 75½″ x 40″

90. SLEDDING, CENTRAL PARK 1912. *Signed l.r.* 24″ x 32″

91. JULIA'S SISTER About 1915. 32″ x 26″

92. BATHERS, ILE ADAM 1927. *Signed l.l.* 26″ x 32″
Lent by Mrs. Albert C. Lehman.

ALCOVE BETWEEN GALLERIES V AND VI

PAINTINGS

93. Music Hall Turn About 1918. 13″ x 16″
94. New Hampshire Village About 1922. 9″ x 15″
95. Anemones 1926. *Signed l.l.* 16¼″ x 13″
96. French Bouquet 1927. *Signed l.l.* 16″ x 13″
97. Vegetables on Blue Plate 1937. *Signed l.r.* 12″ x 15″

Paintings listed are oil on canvas. Signatures: W. Glackens, *except Nos. 16, 31, 35, 39, 41, 44 and 49 which are signed W. G.*

GALLERY VI

DRAWINGS

98. Yuletide Revels
    Lent by Mr. Albert Lee.
99. Illustration for "At the Sign of the Three Rings" by Wallace Irwin
    "Tin Can Wilson gave a slack-wire exhibition on a lariat stretched across the room."
100. Illustration for "A Broad Prairie Mating"
    "It's a poor place to ask you, girl."
101. Holiday in the Park
    Lent by a Private Collector, New York.
102. Illustration for "On the Beach"
    "And then they saw the Navajo slip almost furtively from sight."
103. Paris Café
104. Fort George Hill
105. Illustration for "A Kansas Childe Roland"
106. Illustration for "Martyrdom À La Mode"
    "That night the Senator and I went to hear one of Graham's speeches."
107. Illustration for "The Boss" by Alfred Henry Lewis
108. Ball Park
109. Illustrations for "The Case of Fanny"
110. Illustration for "The Boss" by Alfred Henry Lewis
111. The Peasant
    Lent by Mr. G. Alan Chidsey.

112. Spanish American War: The Beginning of Debarkation of Troops at Daiqueri

113. Illustration for "The Parent"
"A thin little man with gentle and confiding manners."

114. Curb Brokers

115. Illustration for "The Parent"
"We want the children should learn readin' and spellin' and do sums."

116. Spanish American War: El Pozo. Caissons on the Way to the Front

117. The East Side

118. Illustration for "The Michaelmas Goose"

119. Illustration—"Woman Weeping"

120. Illustration for "The Husbands" by Paul De Kock
"Papa, carry me, take me up in your arms."

121. Illustration for a Story by Paul De Kock

122. Illustration for "The Grisettes" by Paul De Kock
"The greatest happiness a grisette can experience is to make the conquest of an actor."

123. Illustration
"We all three hugged and kissed each other and cried."

124. Illustration
"I went down that there slide faster than the Empire State Express."

125. Christmas Shoppers, Madison Square

126. Illustration for Story by Eden Phillpotts
"Made the rope fast and swung off."

127. Illustration for Story by Eden Phillpotts
"The chain clanked from morning 'til night."

128. Illustration for "Flotilla Smiles"
"You were right. It was a mine."

129. Illustration
"Bothering nobody."

130. Patriots in the Making
Lent by Mr. Albert Lee.

131. Illustration for "The Little Tin Bank"
"You just stay heah and tend the baby awhile."

132. Illustration for "Flotilla Smiles"
"Call yuh."

ILLUSTRATIONS

LUXEMBOURG GARDENS

Collection of the Corcoran Gallery of Art

CHEZ MOUQUIN

Collection of The Art Institute of Chicago

BUEN RETIRO, MADRID

SHOPPERS

RACE TRACK

Collection of The Barnes Foundation

NUDE WITH APPLE

FAMILY GROUP

PARADE, WASHINGTON SQUARE

Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art

GIRL IN BLACK AND WHITE — Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art

SUMMER

CAFÉ LAFAYETTE

Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Lincoln Isham

THE RAFT

Collection of The Barnes Foundation

ARMENIAN GIRL

Collection of The Barnes Foundation

CHILD IN A GARDEN

GARDEN AT HARTFORD

THE DREAM RIDE

NUDE, 1924

PROMENADE

Collection of The Detroit Institute of Arts

BATHERS, ILE ADAM

Collection of Mrs. Albert C. Lehman

BAL MARTINIQUE

VENCE

Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art

HILLSIDE NEAR LA CIOTAT

FÊTE DE SUQUET

Collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art

THE SODA FOUNTAIN

BOUQUET IN QUIMPER PITCHER

YULETIDE REVELS

Collection of Mr. Albert Lee

HOLIDAY IN THE PARK

Private Collection

WILLIAM GLACKENS

By GUY PÈNE DU BOIS

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